



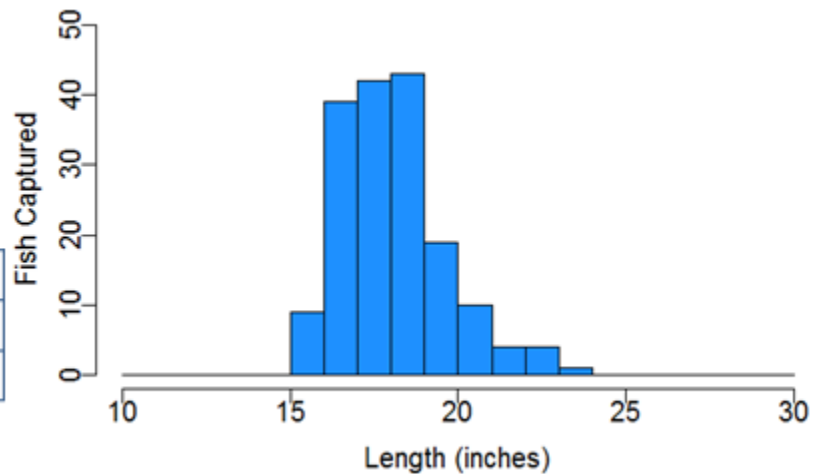
Spring Fisheries Survey Summary Windigo Lake, Sawyer County, 2016-2017

The Hayward DNR Fisheries Management Team and DNR Spooner Treaty Team conducted a fyke netting survey on Windigo Lake from April 12-14 (shortly after ice out), 2016 to assess the adult walleye, northern pike, and black crappie populations in the lake. Eight nets were set overnight for three total nights which resulted in 24 total net-nights of effort. An electrofishing survey conducted on June 7, 2017 documented the status of bluegill, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, and non-game species. Four miles of shoreline were shocked. Quality, preferred, and memorable sizes referenced in this summary are based on standard proportions of world record lengths developed for each species by the American Fisheries Society.

Walleye (Adult)



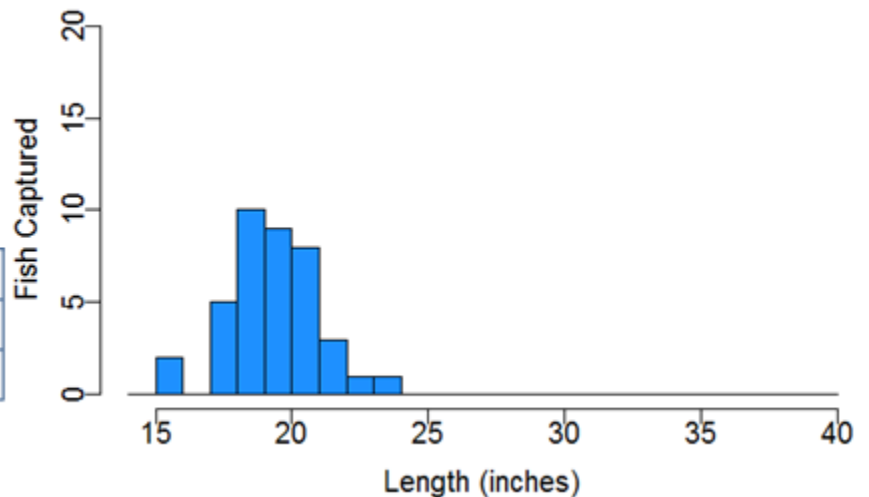
Captured 7 per net-night \geq 10 inches	
Quality Size \geq 15"	100%
Preferred Size \geq 20"	11%



Northern Pike



Captured 2 per net-night \geq 14 inches	
Quality Size \geq 21"	13%
Preferred Size \geq 28"	0%



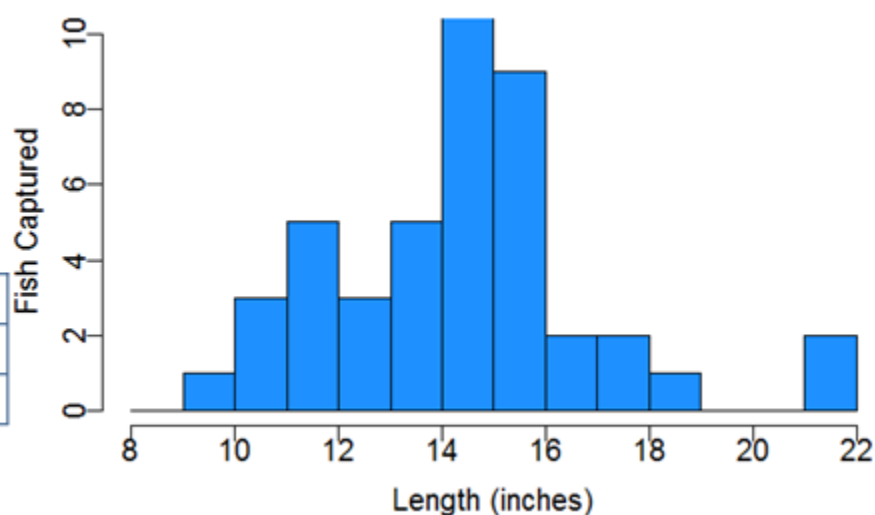
Largemouth bass



Captured 11 per mile ≥ 8 inches

Quality Size ≥ 12 " 80%

Preferred Size ≥ 15 " 36%



Smallmouth bass

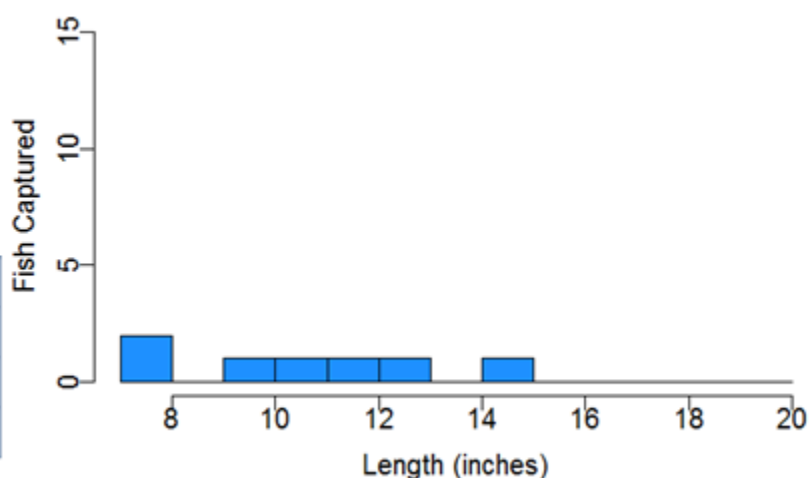


Captured 2 per mile ≥ 7 inches

Quality Size ≥ 11 " 43%

Preferred Size ≥ 14 " 14%

Memorable Size ≥ 17 " 0%



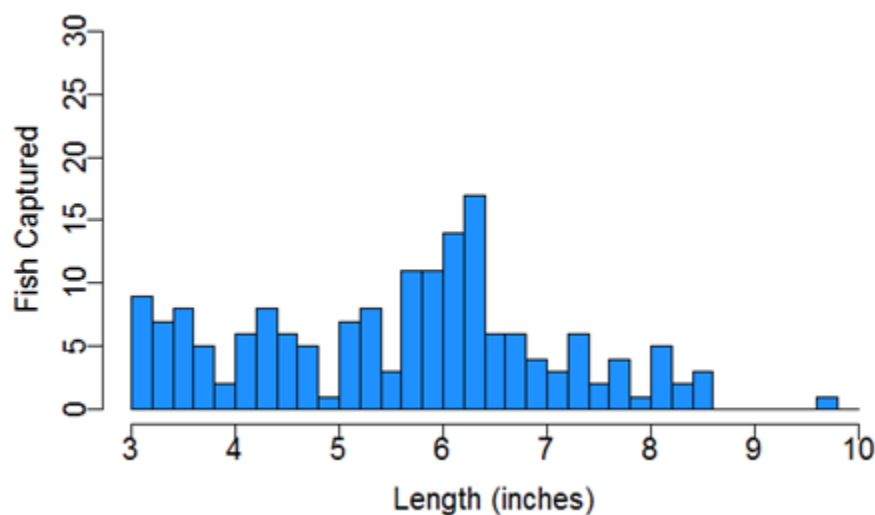
Bluegill



Captured 43 per mile ≥ 3 inches

Quality Size ≥ 6 " 43%

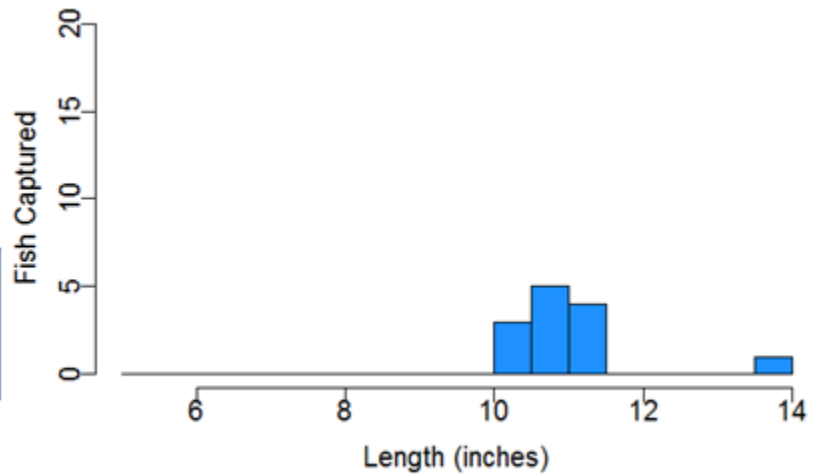
Preferred Size ≥ 8 " 6%



Black Crappie



Captured 1 per net-night ≥ 5 inches	
Quality Size ≥ 8 "	100%
Preferred Size ≥ 10 "	100%



Summary of Results

The DNR fish survey of Windigo Lake was spread over two years with the netting effort occurring in 2016 and the electrofishing effort occurring in 2017 due to logistical constraints. These two efforts combined give a good snapshot of the fishery. It should be noted that the water in Windigo Lake has very poor conductivity which can effect electrofishing catch rate. Data presented here for bluegill, largemouth bass, and smallmouth bass should be interpreted with that caveat in mind. Anglers visiting Windigo Lake should make themselves aware of consumption advisories in effect for the lake.

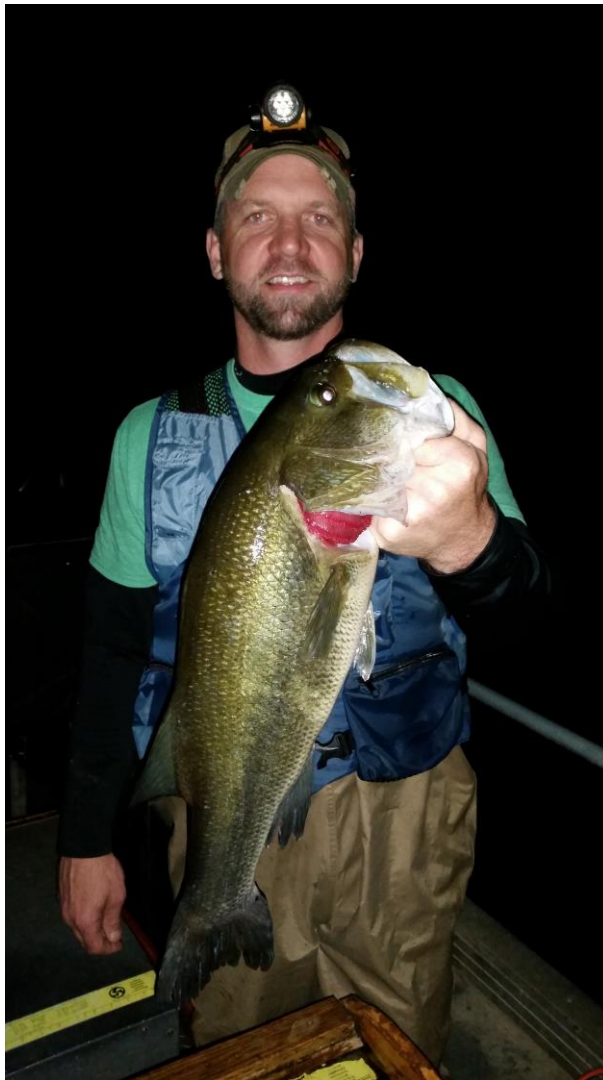
Walleye are experiencing a bit of a resurgence in Windigo Lake after a period of poor recruitment. Walleye abundance appears to be increasing, and most walleye were in the 15-20 inch range.

Northern pike were captured at a relatively low rate in comparison to other lakes in the area. Despite their low relative abundance, pike size is generally poor with few pike over 21 inches present in the lake. The prey base in Windigo Lake may be inadequate to grow many large pike.

Largemouth bass were a pleasant surprise in the 2017 survey. A previous survey of Windigo Lake conducted in 2012 found just 38% of largemouth bass were over 12 inches. In 2017, 80% of largemouth were over 12 inches and two were over 20 inches. Smallmouth bass are also present in Windigo Lake but are less abundant than largemouth bass. While the lake is known to produce some high quality smallmouth bass, the population is generally made up of smallmouth less than 14 inches in length.

Bluegill were another pleasant surprise in the 2017 survey. Windigo Lake previously was dominated by small bluegill. In 2017, almost half of the bluegill captured were over 6 inches and some were over 8 inches. A newly enacted reduced bag limit for panfish and a more abundant walleye population have the potential to further improve the size of bluegill and other panfish.

Black crappie were observed to have low relative abundance but good size potential in Windigo Lake. While only a few crappie were captured as a part of the netting effort they were all quality-sized fish.



Volunteer Kraig Gay holds a 21 inch largemouth bass captured during an electrofishing survey.
Photo by Evan Sniadajewski

Report by Max Wolter – Fisheries Biologist, Sawyer County
Survey conducted by Max Wolter, Scott Braden, and Evan Sniadajewski
Special thanks to volunteer Kraig Gay
Reviewed and Approved by Jeff Kampa – Area Fisheries Supervisor